

Team Omicron

by KaneBuddy

Category: Halo

Genre: Adventure, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2007-04-10 19:47:39

Updated: 2007-04-24 20:30:50

Packaged: 2016-04-27 00:24:28

Rating: T

Chapters: 6

Words: 8,813

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: A squad of ODST's are sent to retrieve something very valuable. On the way there however, the results of their previous incursions with the Covenant appear. This story has been put on indefinite hold. If you desire to see it restarted, please email me.

## 1. Team Omicron

### Chapter 1

February 13, 2552 (Military Calendar)

Morale was low that night in the Pelican; the group of specialists known as Team Omicron had been shipped out so fast they didn't even know what part of the planet they were on. All Captain Enik knew was that it was pitch-black outside, that his group of specialists had been called out from reserves only a half hour ago, that the Covenant was invading and that no one on his team expected to be alive by the morning. He looked at their faces, all of them had been in battle with the covenant before, and most of them were almost brand new to his squad.

Sgt. McCarty just had a blank face, and stared at the other end of the wall. He had been like that ever since Enik knew him, but from reading his dossier he realized that McCarty had become a lot different after his first incursion with the Covenant on the ground.

Sgt. Cramer was on the opposite end of the spectrum, he was twitching his fingers on the barrel of his MA-5B rifle looking impatient to get off and start action. Enik recalled that these two had always been in the same outfit together. He found this to be strange because they never talked to each other except when necessary, and always kept their distance.

Cpl. Whistler was a southern boy, grew up in Louisiana and signed up

for the military the day he turned seventeen. During his days on leave, he was usually found riding a horse somewhere on the base, wearing a cowboy hat, denim pants, a button-up shirt, and an ear-to-ear grin that seemed to shout to the world "I'm Carefree!" Enik liked the kid, he reminded him of what they were all fighting for, not necessarily for earth, but for the innocence that it symbolizes, as well as the men and women who lived there and didn't deserve to die. He didn't want to even think about what Nieto and Douglass had been through. Those two might have been younger than Enik, but he knew they had experienced much more than he had and never asked them. They just stayed to themselves.

As they moved in near the drop zone, Enik knew he had to do something to raise the spirits of the four men who he thought needed it, so he stood up and said "I know most of you do not think we can win this battle, but us winning is only a small part of what we were sent here to do," he paused for a moment, then continued, "we need to give the civilians here a chance to leave, we are going here to face death so that they might live, we need to stay strong, your families are counting on you. This is not only your duty to the UNSC; this is your duty for your family, your neighbor's family, and for all humanity. Tell me you will not fail that!"

His soldiers looked up at him, a new look in their eyes, not despair, not fear, but hope was forming where none had been before. They straightened up loaded up their rifles with determination glimmering off of every fiber of their being, with the Pelican speeding ominously toward a burning city.

Straight off the Pelican, going into the city lit only by the raging fire in the far eastern section, and the occasional civilian escape craft speeding past the clouds into space, the team headed on the road to a set of large houses where they would clear a place for Pelican landings and make it safe for future troops to come through. While heading Enik looked at a signpost, it had a dead elite collapsed on the base as well as a woman with the medical corps insignia on what remained of her helmet. The sign above the two was melted by a stray plasma bolt, "Welcome to Waterrock" it read, "well" he thought, "at least I know where I am know" as he marched his men into the city.

Inside the pitch-black first building, shotgun raised, Enik peered around with his night-vision goggles turned on, and seeing nothing, motioned for his team to follow him inside. While his team formed the standard delta-wing formation in the spacious living room, he went forward and set up a thermal scanner on the second floor steps. The info relayed into his helmet's sensors, there was a clutch of grunts in the basement waiting around, but otherwise, the house was clear. Perfect.

Quickly, he signaled Sgt. McCarty, the team's resident sniper to watch out from the roof while he tried to figure out what to do with the Grunts. He didn't want to attract attention to this house with gunfire or by throwing down a flash grenade or an incendiary bomb, so he decided to go with smoke grenades and suppressed rifles, which because of the night wouldn't be noticeable. "Nieto", he whispered, "cover the door, "Douglass, Whistler, Cramer, silence weapons and ready your smoke grenades, we've got five grunts in the basement." While Nieto set up a stationary machine gun behind an unplugged refrigerator for cover, Enik lead the rest of the team into down the

stairs, which dragged them inevitably towards their destiny.

At the bottom of the stairs right before the unnatural blue light that the grunts had set up, when all of them had switched to suppressed weapons, Enik popped the pins on several smoke grenades, enough of them to insure that nobody without heat vision, like him and his squadmates would be able to see their hand in front of their face. Quietly, his men went into the room, finding the Grunts with ease, thanks to their heat vision sensor beaming images to them. Silent whispers were the only sounds their automatic rifles made, as they quickly blasted four Grunts with well-placed bursts of fire. But Whistler didn't shoot his assigned Grunt; instead, he turned his rifle the opposite way and bashed it in the face, knocking the creature cold.

"Hurry up and help me tie this guy up" said Sgt. Cramer about the now unconscious Grunt, "he's heavier than he looks."

"You really think the brains over on Earth will really like a live specimen enough to get us a promotion?" asked Whistler.

"Of course," he replied, "I'm not even sure if any of those eggheads have even seen a live alien. This'll make 'em go ballistic."

While Whistler and Douglass helped him, Enik went upstairs to check on Nieto and McCarty's status. "Anything yet?" he asked him.

"All quiet Sir."

"Good."

Enik suddenly paused, listening intently to his helmet.

"All right men, saddle up, we've got new orders. We will still be clearing the city, but now we've got to reinforce the 84th contingent in the north/central part of the city, our Pelican is coming back to drop us two 'hogs but can't get us inside the city due to heavy anti-aircraft fire stationed there. Let's get that Grunt in the bird for study and tell the pilot where the dead Med. Officer was. E.T.A. is two minutes."

Riding shotgun in the lead 'hog, Enik felt strangely exposed. He wished they could take the outskirts to the objective, but sadly, they were needed to support the 84th. Turning onto Main St, they could see the flashes of friendly automatic weapons and the bursts of plasma from covenant weapons dancing in the distance.

"All right men, full speed, they need us Now!"

As they sped down the street, a blue Elite directing a Grunt who was shouldering a fuel rod cannon appeared in front of them.

"TURN, HARD RIGHT, HARD RIGHT!!!!!!"

## 2. Road Trip

### Chapter 2

Enik had barely cleared out of his seat when the green blob slammed

into the vehicle he had, until recently, been occupying. He reached for his shotgun, it would be a long shot, but it was the only one he had, he looked around, but it wasn't there. He then turned to his last hope, his good friend "Mr. Magnum" it wasn't there either. Looking up, he saw the Elite, and time seemed to slow. It leveled its plasma rifle. The mandibles split as if grinning. The air stilled. "This is it" he thought, "I'm going to die." He hoped it wouldn't be painful.

"Blam!!!"

The sound wasn't what Enik had been expecting so he opened his eyes just in time to see the Elite collapse in a pool of its own blood. The sounds of battle quickly followed. The clattering of assault rifles and heavy machine guns mixed with the whine of plasma scorching the ground soon filled the air.

"Sir, we gotta get some cover, pull back to the warthog!"

Enik turned to see who said that, he expected to be the only one alive, instead, he saw a helmetless Nieto grabbing him by his shirt as they passed McCarty firing his sniper while back pacing to the damaged remains of their melted warthog, the only protection in sight. Once there, Enik calculated their options; the road was eight to ten lanes wide with no obstructions, but that would leave them wide open because they were now up against the 'hog, which was lying in the median. He quickly regained his composure; he needed to pull himself together unless he wanted to make a mistake just like before. "Not now" he decided

"Nieto! Where the hell is that other Warthog?"

"They skidded past us a bit, here it is now."

As the Warthog pulled up, Enik saw what looked like relief in Whistler's eyes.

He leaned out of the drivers seat saying "Sir, we might'n be able to pinch youse guys in here, but it'd be dangerous, or we could leave you here an' you could protect yerselves with these titanium barriers we brought with us, or"

A wild-eyed McCarty running in between them and staring at Enik interrupted his sentence. Enik knew him well enough in the short time McCarty had been in his squad to know what that look meant. It meant trouble, and by the way he was shaking it had to be big, really big.

"Everyone grab your stuff and get the hell out of there and back here NOW!"

Even as they were piling out of the vehicle, Enik could hear the whine of weapons charging, and knew his fears were now being realized. Hunters.

### 3. Elijah, OhTwenty

Grand Commander Valdez was a menacing sight, his Mexican and Arabian ancestors had crafted him into a man of astounding features which

made some say that he could stop plasma bolts from hitting him by simply glaring at them. With his rotund figure and intimidating eyebrows, one could see how easy it was for him to gain rank fast enough to be the youngest Grand Commander in UNSC history. The half-dozen battle-ready Helljumpers that were constantly by his side, having been handpicked to be his personal bodyguards, further amplified these frightening features

"Come on you wimps!" he barked to a squad of marines sitting down on some ammunition crates, "You see that!" he shouted, pointing to the covenant cruiser in orbit, "That means there are still covenant on this planet, and I'm not about to let any soldiers lounge around like Girl Scouts while lives are being lost and a battle is raging. Get The Hell Out There!!!"

After the soldiers ran off to join the battle in the west, Valdez went into his tent, where his temporary headquarters was set up, and immediately dropped himself into his chair and stared at the canvas wall across from him.

"Alright" he sighed, putting his head on his hands and turning to his lead jumper, Kinsman, "where are those specialists I ordered here a half-hour ago?"

"Sir!" he said, snapping to attention, "We haven't heard from them since the tracking devices on their M12's stopped transmitting. We fear the worst."

"Fine then" he said, falling strangely quiet, "I didn't want to attract attention to our package butâ€¦" he whispered, "get me Oh-Twenty, if our men out there are still alive, they can join forces with him, still though, the point remains the same, this information must get out of here and on Reach before the Covenant get their slimy claws on it."

Valdez strode over to the tactical map of the city, took a seat and thought "well, if we pull back Number 20 from the East Quadrant of the city, we could fill the gap withâ€¦" no, that won't work. Hmmâ€¦ of course!" he shot up from his seat and declared "You three," pointing to half of his Helljumpers, "grab the reserve tanks from the garage and take them to the front line in the East, shoot forward, then quickly pull back, we'll use the gap you'll create to lay down some heavy artillery fire. It'll probably take the Covenant infantry an hour to recover, and we can reset our positions in that part of the city. When you get there, get you-know-who, and tell him that it already hit the fan." He stood there for a moment watching them silently until he screamed "You waiting for an invitation? Get out there NOW!"

"Well, this is great, one snag followed by another" thought Spartan 020, Elijah as he watched the scene from atop a four story apartment block. There was a group of ODSTs being slowly surrounded by Covenant infantry. Elijah knew he had to do something, but because he was detached from Gold Team to meet with Grand Commander Valdez, he had no backup and consequently, this rescue would be a bit tricky. The big man himself had issued a few hours earlier new orders addressed solely to Elijah. His orders were to get to the command tent, assist any friendly forces in need, and to destroy any covenant installations he deems dangerous enough to need immediate destruction. His third order he had followed to the letter. Twelve

covenant anti-aircraft guns and eight methane storage tanks that stored the grunts air supply were now just smoldering piles of wreckage thanks to him. One incident in particular stood out in his mind

He had almost walked right on top of the A-A gun, it was well hidden at the end of the L-Shaped alleyway, and if the grunts hadn't been barking along in their odd language, he would have been used to soak up their plasma. Instead, he kept at the corner of the wall, surveying the scene through his polarized helmet. At the end of the alley was an enlarged square of land that was a good forty feet long in each direction, giving the gun emplacement plenty of room to swivel around. Guarding the A-A gun was three Jackals, two of which held powerful beam rifles that would, with one or two carefully placed shots, fry him in his own armor: they would definitely have to go first. The other jackal and the eight grunts posed less of a problem; they were all only armed with the relatively weak plasma pistols. The grunt bringing up the rear however was carrying a fuel rod cannon. "That would work well for destroying the gun," he quickly surmised. The cannon was powerful enough to destroy all but the most heavily defended targets, and the A-A gun did not fit into that category in any way. He grinned to himself inside his armor at that thought. As he sneaked another peek around the corner, this time with a fiber-optic cable, he found that the grunt patrol was heading down the alley to where he was hiding. He immediately turned around, the alley was bare, nowhere to hide. He looked up and saw an open window; he climbed the wall to get to it, quiet as a mouse. The grunts walked by, taking no notice of the hand-shaped holes in the wall. He waited until the last one, carrying the cannon passed by. He leapt off the building like a thousand pound cat, landing on the rear grunt, breaking all of the unsuspecting creature's bones, and popping its methane pack, creating a loud bang. The first grunt to turn in response was greeted with a knife thrown in its face. Elijah then leapt towards the next nearest grunt, caved in its face with a punch from his massive right hand while his left hand grabbed the plasma pistol it had been holding. A quick rotation and he was facing the remaining five grunts. He squeezed the trigger on and off until all of the grunts had fallen dead, none of them had the time to fire back during the four seconds of action. He grinned again

After he hooked the cannon to his back and pilfered two unused plasma pistols from the dead grunts, he peeked around the corner to find, unsurprisingly, that the Jackals had their weapons armed and pointed down the alley. Quickly, Elijah calculated in his head how the Jackals would react to him, and hurdled into the middle of the alley. He moved into place like a streak of lightening and tapped on the triggers, pointing at the two snipers, until it looked like a solid stream of pure plasma. One just stood there, apparently in shock and was transformed into a pile of ash and charred bones. The second one was a fraction of a second faster, it leapt off of it's balcony only to have its upper body incinerated by his own comrades weapon and the creature's twitching legs fell to the ground. He dropped the now overloaded pistols and charged toward the last, shielded Jackal. It fired his pistol at him, to no avail; the Spartan simply dodged the shot until he reached the poor creature. He didn't know what the Jackal was thinking when he grabbed it by the neck, but the look in its eyes said something like "Oh hell". After taking all three personal shields as ordered by the top Brass at ONI, he looked around for a good multi-purpose weapon. He finally came across a beam rifle, "It'll have to do for now" he sighed

He still had the cannon and beam rifle in his possession, both with considerably less ammunition in them due to several hours of intense action. New to his arsenal however were six plasma grenades, one of their odd needle launching weapons, and a plasma rifle, all of them holstered on his legs.

Elijah had always been the Spartan most likely to take risks to save others lives, and often went out of his way to help others, even when it wasn't in his orders to do so. Regardless of his orders and even his natural feelings, Elijah felt these men were too important to pass by for almost any reason. From what the scene looked like, these men had probably been pinned out here about as long as he'd been traveling to the HQ, about two hours. He saw a burning warthog with a melted engine that the soldiers had used for the flat wall in their protective semi-circle. The circular part of the wall had been constructed out of three Titanium-A barriers, the bodies of three Hunters, and a plethora of jackal and grunt bodies sans the explosive methane tanks. Even with his enhanced vision, he still had a bit of trouble viewing the six soldiers inside the barrier through the smoke created by the burning vehicle and the constant firing of automatic weapons. After looking a bit closer, he could make out the individual soldiers. The closest man to him was firing what appeared to be a LAAG, like the kind put on top of Warthogs, but it would be impossible for them to have carried it that far from wherever they were dropped off. Elijah was still puzzled until he looked at the jeep, "These soldiers are good!" Elijah whispered in awe to himself, he couldn't believe that a set of Marines, even ODSTs managed to unbolt the 'hogs main weapon and bolt it onto the ground.

Another was crouched behind a pile of dead grunts firing off an SMG in short bursts towards an unseen target. A third, lying prone with an S2 had just emptied his clip, and had it reloaded faster than any normal marine he had ever seen, and proceeded to crack out more deadly rounds. The fourth man was hiding behind one of the metal barriers, frantically reloading his assault rifle. The fifth soldier was away from all the action, up against the warthog's metal chassis giving first aid to the last, unconscious one, while simultaneously trying to work his radio. Elijah then wondered, "If they've been here for hours, why haven't I received their distress signal?" he stood there, puzzled until a moment later he decided that it was no time for speculation, first, these soldiers needed saving. He slid down a drainage pipe, bending it on the way down, and sped, heading for the marines' protective enclosure.

#### 4. McCarty

Lying prone behind the pile of dead grunts, McCarty was just about to freak out. He had only twelve rounds left for his rifle, and if that wasn't enough, his best friend, Cramer had been hit in the chest with a burst of plasma and Douglass now had to get out of the fight to deliver first aid. He knew that if they didn't get out within a few minutes, it wouldn't just be Cramer who would need medical attention. While this was running through his mind, he heard a thump behind him, and before he had a chance to turn around, a Hunter chose to make its appearance downrange a bit.

"We're all doomed" he mumbled to himself

It was then that he saw the flash of green light, from behind him surprisingly, and it blasted the hunter back to its creator. He turned around, and saw a metallic, shimmering giant staring down at him. He blinked twice, screamed, and passed out.

Sometime after Harvest and before Reach (Military Calendar)

It was an average day onboard the Heavy Cruiser Twilight's End, McCarty was just lounging around in the cafeteria reserved for his fellow jumpers, swapping stories with the other men in his outfit, in fact, he was just about to tell the one about the Leprechaun and the spacesuit when the alarm started blaring. A voice came on the loudspeaker, it was that of Captain Sparrow, and he was shakily announcing "This is not a drill, the Covenant have entered this system, all land crew are now being ordered to evacuate down to Planet Chimera at once, all men to their battle stations, I repeat, this is not a drill."

McCarty and the rest of his squad were suited up and on their way to the drop capsules before thirty seconds had gone by. They were closer than nearly all other land-based fighters to the drop capsules. Halfway to the drop room, a shock wave rattled through the hull, causing most of the Navy Personnel to be thrown on their backs, but the ODSs thundering down the corridors weren't even shaken. When they finally reached "Hells Waiting Room" as they affectionately called it, Cramer was the first of their squad strapped in, followed immediately after by Julian, Harold, Ming, Smith, Montello, and Juarez. McCarty entered soon after, eager to leave before the majority of the other jumpers would enter and make him wait.

Inside their individual Human Entry Vehicles or "HEV's" they quickly strapped themselves in and were shot out the tubes, all of them hoping that the captain had made sure to point them in the general direction of the planet. McCarty heard the general orders being broadcast over the main COM channel telling all ships in-system to evacuate land-based troops and start firing at will and thought to himself "Thank God I don't have to stay on the ship." Soon McCarty felt the almost unbearable heat pouring over him sighed with relief, the only way the capsule would heat up like this would be if it was entering the atmosphere. So he welcomed the 150+ degree heat that washed across him, making his skin tingle, because it meant he had a chance to live.

He went around, checking the LZ on his computer that was built into his HEV, finding out where he would land and froze. The captain had sent everybody too close to a city; most people were going to land right among the buildings which ensured high casualties even before most would exit their pods.

"ARRRGGGHH!!!" yelled a frustrated McCarty, slamming the side of his metallic and ceramic casing, screaming because the ship's Captain had sent so many people to unnecessarily die. The Helljumpers were unable to control their falling Deathtraps well enough to get away from the city.

THUMP! The sound of his entry vehicle slamming into the soft dirt of a park in the center of the city made McCarty sigh with relief that he survived the fall. After climbing out, he made a point to kiss his good-luck charm, a four-leaf clover which came all the way from Ireland and that was now encased in a glass locket hanging around his



neck. He then turned to the computer built into the capsule to check where Lieutenant Colonel Persham had landed so he could receive orders on what to do. His computer whizzed for a few seconds before showing that the Lieutenant Colonel's pod had entered near the center of the city, smashed into the side of a building and subsequently crashed into a weak point on the road where it fell into the sewer system and floated down until it came out a hundred foot tall man-made waterfall and sunk into the lake that the sewer emptied out to. McCarty shook his head and looked for the second in command, third, fourth, until he realized that no people higher rank than a Warrant Officer had survived re-entry. It would very soon become squad for itself unless someone stood up and took charge. He really hoped someone would take command.

As his squad leader marched the team through the city to find Warrant Officer Herzog, the man who thankfully had the guts to declare himself the new Battalion Commander, McCarty saw how lucky his squad was with only one casualty, poor Julian, landed on top of a seven story building face down and though some civilians tried pulling him up, he eventually crashed on the street. McCarty pushed it out of his mind; he needed to be emotionally intact if he were to be a good soldier. When they entered HQ, which was the Capitol Building in the center of the city, Warrant Officer Herzog was eying through a map of the city set on a wall, with tacks set on it that looked as if they were placed randomly on its surface while talking to his new second in command, Second Lieutenant Chrysler.

"Fire teams Alpha and Bravo of 8th Squad, 56th Company. Ready for Orders Sir!" announced Staff Sergeant Harold, McCarty's leader.

"I'm busy, go talk to Nancy; she's over in the west wing. If it's important enough she'll send you back here."

They hurriedly ran over to the west wing of the building where they saw several people running around the room with papers, and a woman, clad in full battle gear minus the helmet, standing in the center of the room with a laptop, like a rock in the center of a river. When they entered the room, she looked up at them and with one hand, motioned for them to come, while running the other hand through her short, blond hair.

"Okay, so you guys are the eighth, of the 56th eh? It says here you have two snipers in your outfit, is that correct?"

"Was correct ma'am, we lost one in the drop."

"Not again," she sighed, "this means we'll be critically short of specialists, as well as officers until the regular infantry arrive from their life rafts and Pelicans. But I guess we'll have to make due with what we got, that's what we ODST's are good at, improvising. Anyway, I'm gonna need your sniper on the roof of this building right here" she said as she pointing to the map lying on her desk. "It's the second tallest building around, we would put you on the tallest, but that would be pretty a very obvious target for those Covvies."

"Yes Ma'am, and will Cramer be able to join me, he is my secondary spotter."

"Cramer eh? Let's see, hmmm, he's an explosive weapons expert,

consequently, we'll need him on the outskirts of the city with his launcher for protection in case they drop their cavalry here, sorry about that, though I can request another sniper join you."

"That's alright, Ming will join me, we'll move to the building immediately."

McCarty and Ming left the room while Nancy talked to their team leader about strategy and getting the civilians off-planet safely.

"So, what do you think is gonna go down here McCarty?"

"Well, whatever happens, I know we're all too tough to be killed by a bunch of fancy flashlights, am I right?"

"Ohhh, you are too true man," said a grinning Ming

They reached to top of the tower just as several life rafts touched down just outside the Capitols limits and several Pelicans who must have been informed beforehand descended upon the Capitol Building. Then, like clockwork, Covenant Spirits and Seraphs ripped out of the atmosphere, setting the sky on fire with their plasma cannons and Marines who had but moments ago been checking their equipment began a frantic scramble for cover, trying to avoid the blasts that would mean certain death. After the initial wave, the Rocketeers came out of hiding, as well as people manning turrets, and together; they unleashed a withering volley that downed several dozen Seraph Fighters and even more of the slower troop transports, Spirits. McCarty and Ming stood watching the scene until a damaged Seraph flew out of control past them and became one with a concrete wall not two hundred yards away from them, shocking them back to reality. Quickly, they set up several sensors to help with Intel gathering, readouts on the battlefield, and just a general layout of how the city needs to be fortified. McCarty then unlocked his sniper's bipod, lay on his stomach and started taking out several grunts that were now massing to the south of the city. He had just set his sights on one of the U-shaped Spirit crafts that was deploying its troops and was just about to take out the lead grunt when Ming tapped him on the shoulder saying "Dude, check this out man" and proceeded to point his aim to what had the size and shape of an upright coffin, it popped open and a creature was climbing out, he was just about to see what was going to climb out when Ming tapped him again saying "I really don't like giving you all this bad news, but take a look near the horizon."

McCarty complied and just sat there, staring at the sight. It was a heavy Covenant troop transport, not like the flimsy spirit craft, but a ship that could hold thousands of infantry, vehicles and everything else he didn't want to imagine. That moment, everything changed for McCarty, he just told himself "Nobody is gonna get off this planet alive."

## 5. Cramer

### Chapter 5

"Direct Hit! Oh Yeah!" exclaimed an ecstatic Cramer after sending the pilot of a Banshee to meet its maker, "Uh oh, here comes another" he

followed up with while diving into a dry wash.

Things had been going great for the groundside front lines, the ODS'T's had come early enough for the front lines to be established, the snipers were picking off high-ranking aliens, the turrets were all in overlapping fields of fire, the anti-aircraft emplacements were almost done, and cover for the men on the front lines was nearly done.

"Truly, were are going to kick some serious butt on this planet" remarked Cramer after surveying all the defenses set in place and looking at burning Covenant aircraft streaking across the sky.

Montello, who stood next to Cramer in the dried out streambed, nodded his head slowly, soaking up the scene with his eyes. "Okay man, reload; we gotta be ready for the next wave soon. How many rockets you got left?"

"Two, already in the launcher."

Good, I'll go get some from the ammo dump; I need some ammo for my rifle anyways. I got only about two clips left. An' you know? I would've thought that a bunch of advanced aliens would put up a better fight than this, nobody died except the ones in the drop and the five from the attack-ship waves."

"I know, but remember, we still haven't seen any ground troops, we don't know how good they are."

"Well, I dunno, reports say that these things aren't more that a few feet tall. I think we can. Oh my lord. What is that thing?" said Montello, dropping his rifle to the ground.

"What is it?" said Cramer, squinting in the morning sun.

As he watched what McCarty had seen before, Cramer felt his jaw go slack, as he saw not only the craft, but the thousand or so aliens unloaded from it that were on a march to the city. Going at their pace, they were only two minutes from the city, and the eager ones were already reaching the line the Marines, both regular and ODS'T alike had formed across the flat plain.

"Montello, forget the ammo and get back down here, we're going to have to stay with what we got."

"Don't have to tell me twice" said Montello as a few plasma bolts zinged in his general direction.

A few of the faster grunts were already closing in on their position. "Montello, you got these dudes?" asked Cramer.

Some bursts of automatic fire and four dead grunts later, he received his reply, "Yup."

"Okay man, stay low, I need to get a lock on this new target." Cramer said, kneeling down in the wash and pointing at the sky, "almost there" he muttered.

"Cramer! Get down!" yelled Montello, ten feet away.

"I've almost got this thing" he answered, "oneâ€| moreâ€| second."

As the missile left the tube, Cramer felt himself being thrown onto the ground, felt a few dull thumps, and a scream next to his ear. He looked up and saw the blue sky, looked down and saw Montello lying on top of him, several plasma burns going through his armored back and his spine and insides exposed. Cramer rolled him off and took off his face-concealing helmet, and a pair of lifeless eyes stared back at him.

"No, oh God, I think I'm gonna be sick. Montello, youâ€| you saved me."

A plasma bolt then singed the air above him, making his skin crackle, and reminding him that a nearby enemy must have done this. He snatched Montello's battle rifle, rolled to the edge of the wash and peeked over it. There were two grunts, looking nervous, and pointing away from him. He turned his fallen friend's rifle to full auto and hosed down the grunts with a clip of armor piercing rounds to their torsos. He then dropped the rifle to shoulder his launcher which he had strapped to his back and fired his last remaining rocket into a group of two dozen shielded Jackals that only had a second to see their death coming. Now out of ammo for any long-range weapon, he grabbed his pistol and turned to see the front line, so pristine one minute ago, now a smoldering field filled with burning wreckage and dead bodies, both Covenant and Human. A few badly aimed shots that turned the ground into glass reminded him of his own problems. Five grunts had come within firing range while he had blown up the Jackals and he began frantically unloading his magnum into the group. Two fell with his first clip, but the others just kept running towards him. He primed a grenade and tossed it to them while diving behind a tree to avoid the bolts that now seemed to fill the air. BLAM! The grenade exploded and only one mortally wounded, but still charging grunt was left. He kneeled down for greater accuracy and fired off every bullet in his pistol to the grunt's head, turning it into a sickly paste. He then sprinted to the nearest building, a coffee shop, still with Styrofoam cups filled with the steaming brew. Huffing and out of breath, he looked outside, it was complete chaos. Thousands of Grunts and Jackals were heading for the city at an impressive pace. Now they would be here in less than a minute, if that.

Cramer keyed his private COM channel, linking him with his squad and asked frantically "Sarge! The front lines have been overrun, the Covenant is doing a frontal assault on the city, and we need heavy saturation bombing so we can slow them down and rebuild our defenses."

"That's a negative on the saturation bombing private, the covenant air support knocked out all of our bombers in the first wave, even though they don't control the air, we don't either. Tell any friendly forces in your area to pull back inside the city and use buildings for cover."

Cramer looked outside and saw no movement anywhere, "Sir, I am all the friendly forces left in the area!"

"Well, keep your head down, I'll try to get command here to send in

the Pelicans to do strafing runs and we'll try to send in more men to reinforce that side, stay low. And Cramer?"

"Yes Sir?"

"If I don't see you again, I just want you to know" he paused for a moment, "I want you to know you've been a hell of a soldier. Give 'em hell Marine. Over and Out."

"Click" Cramer turned his COM off and said to himself "I guess everyone expects me to die" he put his pistol on the table. Three seconds later, Cramer mused on what his leader had told him, "Give 'em hell."

He stood up and yelled at the roof "One hundred soldiers weren't able to even hold the front lines fifty yards outside the city." He grabbed a cup of coffee and threw it across the room, "We'd need another whole brigade down here just to hold off these freaks! Either that or Superman." he mused

A string of explosions then quickly drew him to his feet and then outside to a startling sight. The Covenant attacking forces had been thrown into complete chaos. Dozens of craters pockmarked the fields and the thousands of enemies were now dropping like flies, they had been whittled down to only a hundred or so.

"What the?" he looked at the skies. No aircraft anywhere, he was about to head back for cover when a glint on the ground caught his eye. It looked human, but it stood over two meters tall, shone like metal, and it was running at a minimum of 70 KPH. He scanned the field a bit closer and saw five other of the metal men, all of them running a crisscross pattern around the surviving aliens, firing human weapons.

"Well that's comforting." Cramer thought.

The men went about their spring cleaning until all of the aliens were no longer moving, and two of them began piling the alien weapons near a concrete park bench. Then they started walking towards the city. Walking towards him.

A frightened Cramer looked around and found a car abandoned in the middle of the four lane road and rolled for it, all the while keeping an eye on the metal giants. They all grouped together not twenty meters away. Cramer stared at them, confused. They just stood there, he couldn't understand. They didn't talk; sometimes one would move his head a bit or flex his hand, but nothing Cramer would understand as hand signals. Odd to say the least.

Then he heard the crackle of a speaker turn on and a deep voice saying "Private Cramer, Squad Eight. Over here, double time!" one of the people pointed to him and motioned for him to come.

"Yes Sir? Are you from the UNSC?" Cramer asked confused.

"Affirmative, but there is no time to talk about that, our COM channels went dead, something from the electricity in the Covenant's weapons shorted them out, our armors radios haven't received adequate shielding yet. Radio the person in charge here and tell them to get

two Pelicans out here ASAP."

Three Pelicans then roared overhead, circling the battlefield like vultures over carrion.

"Cancel that order Private, hail those birds over here, and tell them it is red-alert first class priority"

Cramer complied again, still confused, and the two Pelicans came to rest near the group of metallic beings that had been ordering him around for the past few seconds. The other flew back into the direction it came from.

"What are you waiting for soldier? Start loading up this Covenant tech onto this Pelican." said the man "We don't have too much time; the Covenant is just about to break through our defenses."

"Break through our defenses? You guys just slaughtered these guys, there aren't any left to break through any defenses" Cramer asked in disbelief while taking an armload of plasma weapons to the Pelican.

"You mean you haven't heard about what's happening upstairs?"

Cramer had already forgotten about the space battle. He was used to being drilled on ground battles, and only now remembered that the Covenant was also in space.

"Please don't tell me it's going sour for us." Cramer pleaded.

"It is" he responded "we're sending dropships to get as many people out as possible, but its mainly going to be children and military personnel" he then glanced at the sky then turned and ran into a Pelican. When he emerged, he said flatly "Get in, we're leaving, NOW!"

On his way to the Pelican, Cramer glanced up at the sky, he saw a ship in low orbit, it reminded him of a whale or something.

## 6. Sanity?

As Cramer was lying down with Douglass bandaging him up and filling his innards with biofoam, he recalled that McCarty had sent out a distress signal and the third pelican had flown over and barely picked him up before the order to pullout came through. McCarty never did say what happened to Ming though. In fact, he never said anything about what happened on his building. Whatever happened to him, Cramer figured, must have done something, because he wasn't the same after that mission. They were the only two who ended getting off alive, them and those six Spartans. He wondered briefly if the one now standing in front of him had been at that planet.

"Well not so good, we're running out of ammo and we've got one man down, if it wasn't for you taking out that Hunter, we'd all probably be piles of ash by now."

Cramer knew who the voice belonged to, but it seemed so distant, so very far away. "Captain, is that you?" he groaned.

Enik moved toward him sat on his heels and said "Yea, it's me, don't worry, were gonna get you out of here soon. The command tent is only a few minutes away and we'll get you patched up there soon." He hated lying to his soldier, especially Cramer. He really deserved better. Motioning toward Douglass, he gave a signal to sedate Cramer.

He turned to the behemoth who had introduced himself as Spartan 020 and who, now, over the roar of the constant firing, began to speak again.

"Captain, I can stay and help your squad for a little while, but I have higher orders that I need to accomplish soon."

"Fine with me, as long as you can hold off these guys for about five minutes while we make a run for it, we'll be fine."

The man known as Twenty stood there, impassive. Enik wondered if he had heard him, several seconds passed by, Enik broke out into a cold sweat and was about to repeat himself when the giant replied. "That could work out Sir, prep your men to leave and I'll take over and cover your rear. I can give you six minutes before I fall back."

Enik breathed a sigh of relief and turned to Douglass "Patch Cramer up quickly and, you're going to be carrying him and all of his stuff"

"Yes Sir"

As Douglass began packing everything up, Enik mulled over in his head what he was going to do. No scenario he ran through his mind ended in anything other than his entire squad meeting their fate in various horrible ways. He'd already lost a and two other squads before, and he didn't know if he could handle losing another one. He kept thinking until he saw the Spartan growing impatient, and Enik decided that leaving to an unknown fate was better than knowing he would die here.

"All right, Nieto! McCarty! He shouted above the noise and stared down at a motionless McCarty, "Wake up, we're moving out." He said, nudging his side with his left combat boot.

"Mph, Mshmph, gling. Ming, I'm sorry, I had to, please, don't be mad. Don't you understand? I had to, you, you just wouldn't listen. No, Ming! Ming!" and McCarty became quiet again.

More prods, shouting in his face, and a few slaps to his cheeks did nothing to wake him. Enik then retrieved the "early bird" syringe from his pack, a stimulant designed to keep soldiers awake for the better part of two days which was also used by college students illegally during finals week, and was about to inject McCarty when a metallic gauntlet placed itself between the needle and its target.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you Captain" said the owner of the intrusive hand.

"And why not?" asked Enik, a bitter tone in his voice.

"I do not want to seem obtrusive to your command Captain, but besides

being trained to fight, I have also trained in psychology and medicine. This man, McCarty seems to be suffering from Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder and repressed memories dealing with whoever this "Ming" was. You wake him up now and all you'll have is a raving lunatic who'll be liable to shoot up the rest of your squad. I'd keep him sedated for awhile and if you make it off-planet get him to a shrink."

"Well, that means that we're down two men. Oh well. Whistler! You grab McCarty, leave his junk here for our buddy Twenty right here, and try to split loads with Douglass." He said, more authority in his voice than usual, "Nieto, down that alley, clear it for us and we'll follow after you get there."

"Right" he said, jumping over the barrier and dashing through the open ground.

He sprinted the distance over the ground, a perfect target for snipers that could be hiding anywhere, on any building. Halfway across and two seconds after he started, a beam of violet light flashed out in front of him. He rolled, clutched his chest, and kept running as he heard his friends exchange fire.

"Okay, Douglass, Whistler, move, move, Move!"

The two human mules ran for the alley like men possessed and beat Enik to the cover. Enik turned to make sure nothing was coming after them, and once satisfied, turned to Nieto.

"I saw you tumble back there, did you get hit?"

"Yes sir" said Nieto through his teeth, "it's not that bad though."

"I don't believe that for a second, your face tells a different story, anyways, you're getting to a medic when we reach the command tent. Meanwhile, you guard our rear and I'll take point."

"Alright sir." He said and limped back.

The group of men moved down the alley twenty feet until the path split like a "T". Enik poked his head out, stole a look in both directions and breathed a sigh of relief, no Covenant. The group kept moving for several minutes, always in the shadows, going through spaces that forced them to squeeze through single file, and one that was wide enough to be called a road, but never came across any enemies. Eventually they came upon a path wide enough for three men to walk abreast that went two hundred yards with no intersecting paths.

"You guys ever see them caged pathways they lead cows through right before they get turned to steaks?" asked whistler, his voice almost inaudible.

"Yeah, but what's that got to do with anything?" whispered Douglass.

"Moo."

Douglass chuckled, but before he could reply, Enik broke the silence



saying aloud, "Cut the chatter men, we're in trouble."

"What is it?" asked the men in unison."

"Dead end."

"Dang, now what, we just walk back?" one Nieto asked while clutching his chest.

The response he received was a series of howls, honks, growls, and barks emanating from behind their path.

"That answer your question?" asked Enik.

Enik stared at his surroundings, the walls were bare. He cursed silently under his breath. If this was an older city on earth, like New York, the alleys would be filled with cover, ranging from dumpsters to old cars, colonized planets though, were all very clean and very few used dumpsters and old cars were always taken care of.

"What now Cap'n?" questioned Nieto.

"Okay, Whistler, Douglass, drop your loads. Douglass, get something powerful and help Nieto cover us; take all of our grenades we reserved. Whistler, help me look through Cramer's Rucksack, maybe he brought some explosives."

"Okay"

"Right"

"Yes Sir"

Whistler and Enik rummaged through the packs while Douglass and Nieto went back through the path to meet the Covenant. After a few moments, whistler brought out what looked like a can of Cheese Whiz.

"Found us a can o' fun sir" he said with his usual grin, "our buddy brought along a can of C-7 explosives, we can blow a hole through this wall an' probably thirty more."

"Good, I'll take that and make us a door, you assist the others, and tell them that when they hear a boom to run like hell back here, they'll have fifteen seconds to get through before I close the door."

"I don' know what yer gonna do, but I'll go get 'em"

Enik waited until he was out of sight and went to the dead end wall, shook the can and sprayed an oval onto the wall, about five feet high and two wide, he then went back ten-fifteen feet and started spraying a line on the ground, from one end of the wall to the other. He then continued the unbroken line of explosives up either wall, as high as his arms would reach. He stuck a fifteen second fuse on it and went back to his oval. He put a five second fuse on the string and set it with a lighter. He turned around and promptly fell on his face.

"Crap! The bodies, how could I forget them!" he screamed in

frustration, he grabbed both men, heaved them on his shoulders and started running. Four seconds later, an explosion rocked through his body, reverberating through his bones, and knocking him to his chest. He picked himself and the bodies up, pausing only to light the second fuse and hope that the rest of his team would make it.

5

End  
file.